

REMARKS

This is in response to an Office Action mailed March 23, 2004 (Paper No. 7) which is in response to a previously submitted Office Action mailed March 8, 2004, that Office Action (Paper No. 6).

In Paper No. 6, the Office Action mailed March 8, 2004, the Examiner failed to indicate if a shortened statutory period for reply existed. Therefore, via telephone conference with Examiner Bashore, Examiner Bashore indicated reissuance of the present Office Action to correct the noted informality.

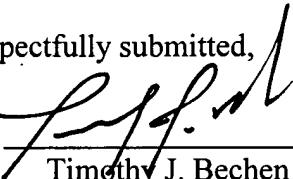
Whereupon, Applicants received Paper No. 7, the Office Action mailed March 23, 2004. On page 1 of the Office Action, attached hereto in Exhibit A, the Examiner has not indicated whether the present Action is a final or non-final Action. In the detailed action itself, the Examiner does not indicate whether the present Action is final or non-final.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully request the issuance of a new Office Action succinctly indicating whether the present Action is final or non-final. Moreover, Applicants request an indication of any shortened statutory reply period. It is noted that Applicants are unable to respond to the present Office Action, Paper No. 7 based on ambiguities regarding the finality of the present Office Action, Paper No. 7.

As such, Applicants respectfully request reissuance of the present Office Action indicating the proper formality. Should the Examiner have any questions or seek a telephone conference to further the prosecution of the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact the below-signed attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

By:


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